

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheet(s)" of drawings include(s) changes to Figure(s) 1 and 5A-5D. The attached "Replacement Sheet(s)," which include(s) Figure(s) 1-5D replace(s) the original sheet(s) including Figure(s) 1-4B.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Examiner's objections, rejections and comments in the Office Action of August 26, 2005 and have prepared the following response.

Claims 2-12 and 21-24 remain pending in this application. First, Applicants express appreciation that the Examiner has indicated claims 2 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include the limitations of the base claim. By this paper, claim 1 has been canceled, claims 2 and 7 have been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the limitations of original claim 1, and claims 21-24 have been added for consideration by the Examiner. In addition, of the Examiner's request, new Figures 5A-5D have been added to show a cross sectional shape selected from a group consisting of a square, a rectangle, an oval, and a circle. Reference to the added figures has been made in the amendments to the specification. No new matter has been added by virtue of these amendments.

Turning now to the issues raised in the Office Action, claims 1 and 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Griesemer (U.S. Patent No. 4,818,023, hereinafter "Griesemer"), and claims 8-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Griesemer in view of Yasui (U.S. Patent No. 5,692,780, hereinafter "Yasui"). Finally, the Examiner has objected to claims 2 and 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that each would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and objections in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

As indicated above, Applicants have amended claims 2 and 7 to include all the limitations of their original base claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully aver that claims 2 and 7 are in condition for allowance.

With respect to dependent claims 3-6 and 8-12, each of these claims have been amended to depend from newly amended, independent claim 2. Therefore, without conceding the Examiner's position, Applicants contend these claims are allowable as a result of the dependency from claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

With respect to new claims 21-24, Applicants aver that these claims are allowable as a result of the dependency from newly amended, independent claim 7 and accordingly are in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that the above amendments are not to be construed as a concession to the Examiner's position regarding the prior art. Applicants are merely trying to expedite allowance of the present application, and hereby preserve the right to pursue the rejected claims in a continuance application.

From the foregoing, Applicants submit that the remaining claims in this patent application are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims and passage of the application to issue are courteously requested. If a telephone conference would expedite allowance or resolve any further questions, such a conference with the undersigned is invited at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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